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Equity Role of Education in Economic Opportunities Between Scheduled Castes/Tribes and General Castes Segments

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RI INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Sector 'O', Aliganj Housing Scheme, Lucknow - 226 020

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EQUITY ROLE OF EDUCATION IN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN
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Imparting education among human resources implies improvements in cognitive ability, technical skills and knowledge, productive efficiency and mobility in different occupations and geographical areas and thus enhances productivity and, as a consequence, raises earnings and income levels of individuals and also brings about increasing contribution in economic developments. Besides the general contribution that education makes to economic development, it is also considered to be a potent instrument to bring about equality of economic opportunity. So it is plausible that education can compensate for the lack of material assets, so as to bring the economic conditions of the people who own little or no assets, and thus influence a degree of economic equality, despite inequalities in the ownership of material resources.

While education can be an effective instrument for equalizing income distribution, it is also equally possible that any given level of educational opportunity may increase inequality despite the differentials in socio-economic background and several other variables, among people. This is the central

theme that the present paper tries to examine. Beside this the paper examines, the extent and level to which education could be an effective instrument for reducing the existing imbalances in the pattern of income distribution between the groups of population, i.e. general castes and Scheduled Castes/Tribes.

The paper is based on primary data collected from the sample of 200 households, comprising 100 households each in rural and urban areas. From both the areas an equal proportion of households were selected among the groups of general castes and scheduled castes/tribes households. Besides it was attempted to ensure that in each sub-sample, different income groups are well represented. In the case of urban sample the data collection was carried out in three different municipal wards of Lucknow city. And with respect to rural sample, three villages were selected considering into account the availability pattern of different levels of educational facilities and their geographical locations. Among the three sample villages, two villages had the facility of primary education and the middle and secondary level of educational facilities was available only in ^{one} village while one village was situated in the remote area, the population of this village had to cover four kilometres for primary and secondary education while the facility of higher education is available in the Lucknow city only.

I. PATTERN OF EDUCATIONAL UTILIZATION

The utilization of various levels of educational facilities seems to have progressed quite satisfactorily among the scheduled castes/tribes population. Sometimes the SC/ST population have made better progress than the general caste groups of population in their gross enrolment rates. During the decade 1961 and 1971 the growth rate of enrolment in favour of SC/ST population was 5.48 per cent in all educational levels was higher than that of the general castes population (5.23%). Accordingly the coefficient of equality for SC/ST population has increased from 64.70 per cent in 1971 over 1961.¹

However, the performance of SC/ST population is to be considered at different educational levels it is noted in some studies that the significant increase in their aggregate enrolment ratio is mainly due to the higher increase of enrolments at elementary level of education. Its importance is lost as the drop-outs among SC/ST population are reported to be much higher as compared to the other castes population at the primary level of education.² Accordingly the wastage and stagnation among the SC/ST children at primary and middle level of education is found to be three-times higher than that of the higher castes population.³ Nearly one-half of the SC/ST children getting enrolled in class one, drop-out upto class five and only a quarter of them reach in class seven, thus the school leavers after the final examination of class eleven or

twelve represents only about 15 per cent of those originally enrolled.⁴ Due to a frequent and higher drop-outs at the elementary and secondary level of education their strength is very poor at higher level of education. A study conducted in 57 colleges of Maharashtra⁵ finds that the proportion of scheduled caste children was about 6 per cent in 50 colleges while there was no enrolment from them in seven colleges. Similarly, the enrolment of these castes is found negligible in the professional and technical education such as medical and engineering.

(i) Enrolment Rates

In our sample study, we find that the enrolment rates of general castes population are significantly higher as compared to scheduled castes/tribes population. These differences become more marked as we proceed from lowest to higher age-groups, corresponding to lower to higher levels of education. Overall, the enrolment rate of SC/ST population in the age group 6-23 years is 48 per cent as against of 66 per cent in case of general castes population. But in the age group 16-18 years, the SC/ST's enrolment rate is 55 per cent as against 77 per cent of general castes, and in 19-23 age group the figure for former group is 9.5 per cent and for latter is 32 per cent.

Enrolment rates of girls both from general castes and SC/ST are always at lower order than that of boys in all levels of education. But the girls from general castes have a much

higher overall enrolment rate of 59 per cent as against 40 per cent among the girls from SC/ST group. Differences prevail across the various age groups. Very small proportions (8.79%) of girls from SC/ST as against general castes (20.67%) were found in higher education. Differences in male enrolment rates were sharper at higher level of education where only 10.5 per cent of SC/ST boys against 41.5 per cent of them from other general castes in the age group 18-23 years were found enrolled.

Table 1 : Enrolment Rates of General Castes and Scheduled Castes/Tribe's Population

Age Groups (Years)	General Castes			SC/ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
6 - 11	90.24	87.50	89.04	81.58	70.27	76.00
12 - 14	83.33	76.92	80.00	70.97	46.15	63.64
15 - 18	82.35	66.67	76.92	56.82	50.00	54.55
19 - 23	41.46	20.67	32.00	10.53	8.70	9.53
All Groups	71.88	58.77	66.23	54.31	39.83	47.96

Analysing the enrolments of scheduled castes/tribe group of population according to the PCI levels of households we find that the relationship is somewhat diffused. Of course, the relationship is more consistent in their case than the general castes in-so-far-as the highest enrolment rate among the SC/ST is found in the highest PCI groups. While in the case of general castes, enrolments in the highest PCI group (above Rs.6000) are lower than in the PCI group of Rs.4500 - Rs.6000 and

Rs.2500 - Rs.3500; the highest being in the case of latter PCI group. In the case of SC/ST, enrolment rates are lower in the PCI range of Rs.2500 - Rs.3500 than in the immediate lower PCI group. Yet, overall the relationship holds that the enrolment rates raise according to PCI range. In fact, the influence of income level on enrolment rates comes out more sharply in the case of SC/ST population than the general castes population, particularly when we consider the enrolment rates for male and female separately.

Table 2 : Enrolment Rates of General Castes and SC/ST Population by Sex and PCI Levels

PCI of Households (in 000 Rs.)	General Castes			SC/ST		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Below 1.5	58.83	38.10	47.37	35.30	17.40	28.07
1.5 - 2.5	71.43	36.37	59.38	63.02	35.99	52.28
2.5 - 3.5	90.33	60.00	80.44	48.00	35.72	43.59
3.5 - 4.5	61.77	70.59	64.71	63.64	50.00	56.53
4.5 - 6.0	66.67	80.00	73.69	50.00	75.00	60.77
6.0 & above	85.72	61.54	70.00	66.67	100.00	83.34
All Groups	71.80	58.77	66.23	54.31	39.83	47.96

(ii) Drop-Outs

The assessment of drop-outs among general castes and SC/ST groups of population is carried out by using the information relating to such individuals in the sample household who discontinued their study after getting enrolments in educational system.

Drop-outs from different educational levels are estimated by taking into account the population which was enrolled in primary education (first standard) and the proportion who have reached in middle, secondary and higher level of education.

Overall, of the 100 children enrolled in Class I about 30 per cent are reported as having reached the stage of post secondary. Those dropping out before completing primary education constitute a small proportion (2.55%) of those enrolled. But another 17 per cent discontinued after completing primary education but before finishing middle level of education. About 15 per cent leave in between middle and higher secondary level but a large proportion (35%) drop-out either after the secondary education or during the course of college level education.

Table 3 : Rates of Drop-Out Among General Castes and SC/ST Population by Level of Education

Level of Education	General Castes	SC/ST	All Groups
Pre-Primary	2.28	2.88	2.55
After Primary	11.41	23.56	16.81
After Middle	12.93	17.79	15.11
After Secondary	33.84	37.02	35.32
All Levels	60.46	81.25	69.79

However, there exist larger differentials in the rates of drop-out at different educational levels among the groups of general castes and SC/ST population. The drop-outs at different

educational levels are significantly higher among SC/ST as compared to the general castes population. The extent of higher differentials in the drop-out data between the population groups of SC/ST and general castes are noticed after the completion of primary and middle level education while at pre-primary and after the secondary level of education the differentials are very marginal. Finally 18.75 per cent from SC/ST and 39.54 per cent from general caste groups are found reaching at the higher level of education.

II. DIFFERENCES IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Employment is the situation in which remuneration in cash or kind is received in exchange for active, direct, personal participation in the economic activities.⁶ An unemployment is the condition of labour market in which the supply of labour power is greater than the number of available openings⁷ and employment problem is primarily a problem of inadequate income only secondarily one of insufficient work opportunities. Considering the income approach the Colombia report⁸ possess to define the employment problem as a situation where people are either employed or unemployed but who are in any case receiving a lower income than is required to be provided by what is judged to be a minimum standard of living in that country. It is clear that this definition includes all kinds of unemployment considered as visible and invisible unemployment. As, the visible unemployment relates to such individuals who are

without work and actually searching employment at the ongoing wage rates in the reference period and a certain volume of visible unemployment may be accompanied with a much larger volume of invisible unemployment.⁹ The Committee of experts on unemployment observed that a person who is unemployed throughout a particular week and does not expect to take up some gainful work in future, even when he is in search or available for it can appropriately be deemed really unemployed.¹⁰ In summing up the various concepts of unemployment, it can be considered that the unemployed are those who are seeking employment on a reference day and those are actually not employed but available to take a job if offered one.¹¹

In our analysis the term unemployed relates to those who are seeking employment and the labourforce includes all the workforce and unemployed. Thus in the process of estimation of workforce we have included the entire working population whether their employment status at the time of survey was either permanent, temporary or casual. Similar criterion is also adopted by CSO and NSS 11-12 and 23th rounds.

The employment opportunities for different levels of educated labourforce depends on a number of economic variables, their growth pattern and supply and demand conditions. In fact, it is believed that with rising educational levels and productive efficiency employment with better remuneration tend to increase. However, the individuals with lower level of education have wider range of occupational choices whereas those

with relatively higher education prefer to take few specific kinds of occupations. Thus the employment opportunities in general are higher for individuals with lower level of education as compared to those possesses higher level of education.

However, besides education, there are several socio-economic variables which determine the employment opportunities among similarly educated individuals but representing different socio-economic backgrounds. Among the various socio-economically depressed groups the scheduled castes and tribes are observed to have the disadvantage in employment and earning opportunities as compared to other social groups even after they attain a certain level of education. The socio-economic situation of SC/ST population itself is considered to be a major factor in perpetuating this advantage as the labour market is not freely competitive and access to jobs and particularly better paid jobs are, to a large extent, a function of the socio-economic status of the households. Even when the government attempts to remedy the situation by positive discrimination in favour of these groups, through reservations and relaxations in eligibility for employment in different sectors of economy, the gains are found to have mainly gone to those with relatively higher socio-economic status within this group.

(i) Participation in Employment

In India, although SC/ST have attained significant changes in their employment and earning conditions as a result of the

government policy of protection, their average levels still continue to be significantly lower than those of general population. A study in Delhi found that the high caste Hindus and Sikhs earned 5 per cent higher than the scheduled caste workers.¹²

Our findings also probably reflect the result of these protective measures in favour of SC/ST, to the extent that a larger percentage of workers belonging to SC/ST groups with different educational attainments are in employment as compared to the similarly educated persons from other social groups. Thus while incidence of unemployment is about 10 per cent among the workers from general castes, only 4 per cent of the SC/ST workers are unemployed. Unemployment rate among the general castes is lower, in fact zero, in the case of workers with upto middle level of education, but is 22 per cent among those with secondary education and 12 per cent among with higher education. Among SC/ST population, 95 to 97 per cent are employed irrespective of their educational levels.

Table 4 : Employed as Percentage of Labourforce from Different Castes by Level of Education

Level of Education	General Castes	SC/ST
Upto Primary	100.00	96.80
Middle	100.00	97.97
Secondary	77.97	94.83
Higher	87.88	94.86
All Levels	90.35	96.02

(ii) Age at Seeking Employment

The age at which an individual starts seeking employment is also generally determined by his socio-economic conditions. The highly elastic demand for income among low income group families compels their family members to join the labour market at an early rather than to go in educational system whereas those in higher income groups have no such economic compulsion. Also, the age pattern at seeking employment also vary with the pattern of educational attainments. It is, therefore, logical to find, as we find in our analysis that those with less than primary education start seeking employment at the age of 15 years and as we proceed to middle, secondary and higher education the average age at entry into labour market increase to 16, 18 and 21 years. These figures are well correspond to both the cases of general castes and SC/ST population. However, the

Table 5 : Average Age at Seeking Employment by Level of Education

Level of Education	(Age in Years)		
	General Castes	SC/ST	All
Upto Primary	14.86	15.16	15.12
Middle	15.52	16.13	15.87
Secondary	17.60	17.91	17.17
Higher	20.61	20.64	20.62
All Levels	17.60	16.66	17.15

overall emerging proposition is that the members of socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SC/ST) enter into labour force at an earlier age as compared to others, due both to the

economic compulsions and inability to pursue education. Further it is well supported by our findings regarding the average age at which a SC/ST population start seeking employment as compared to the corresponding figures for general castes. Average age of SC/ST population entering the labour market for seeking employment is about 17 years whereas that for the general caste workers is 18 years.

(iii) Waiting Period

The concept of waiting period used by us relates to the time devoted in search of employment by individuals. Period of waiting between discontinuing study or searching employment and finding employment can be explained by job search hypothesis or the rationing hypothesis.¹³ According to job search hypothesis, job seekers attach a high value to shopping around for the best job. The rationing hypothesis on the other hand implies a rigid structure of wages, for institutional reasons, which is insensitive to the excess of supply of labour produced by the educational system. Thus there could be extent of differentials in the waiting period of labourforce with similar level of education and labourforce having differentials in socio-economic characteristics and depending upon number of jobs available for different levels of educated labourforce.

Our analysis revealed that the highest duration of waiting period before finding employment first time is noticed among the labourforce having secondary level of education (0.98 years)

followed by higher and middle; in both the cases it is almost one year. Those with no education or below primary education on the other hand wait the least, say around 35 days and those with middle level education for about 190 days. Morse¹⁴ in his study also finds similar kinds of results in case of unemployment pattern before finding employment among different levels of educated labourforce in almost all the developing countries. He cited that the highest waiting period for employment of population with secondary and higher education may be due to the increase in the stock of labourforce having these educational levels. Turnham¹⁵ also finds that the higher incidence of unemployment among secondary and higher level of school leavers.

Further, we observed that the average waiting period for employment in relation to SC/ST population is 0.49 years which is relatively less than the general caste population (0.61 years). This is partly due to the lack of economic capacity to wait and, therefore, the tendency to accept whatever job is available at the earliest; and partly due to the easier access to job due to reservation policy in favour of SC/ST job seekers.. However, it is noted that the waiting period of SC/ST population with middle and secondary education is comparably higher than the general castes population. It seems that the advantage of reservation is effective for them only with higher level of education; and at the lowest level of education,

they get engaged in household or traditional activities without waiting for any other employment.

Table 6 : Average Waiting Period for Employment by Level of Education

Level of Education	(in years)		
	General Castes	SC/ST	All Groups
Upto Primary	0.11	0.07	0.09
Middle	0.30	0.81	0.59
Secondary	0.95	1.02	0.98
Higher	0.96	0.88	0.94
All Levels	0.61	0.49	0.55

Thus the protective policy of government in the share of employment for SC/ST population have led to the reduction in the duration of time spent in searching employment in the case of those who have availed of higher education. However, this consideration does not seem applicable for population with primary level of education.

(iv) Occupational Pattern of Employment

Conceptually, labourforce with higher level of education are considered to have opportunity of better status and remunerative occupations than those with relatively lower level of education. However, the labourforce with similar level of education but belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds do not necessarily have equal chances of getting similar kinds of employment. Institutions theories of discrimination also

Table 7 : Occupational Classifications by Levels of Education

Castes	Level of Education				
	Upto Primary	Middle	Second- ary	Higher	All Levels
<u>General Castes</u>					
Cultivators	64.94	50.00	8.70	-	28.21
Agricultural and Non- Agricultural Labourers	23.38	8.33	-	-	8.55
Managerial/Supervisory	-	-	-	32.18	11.97
Ministerial	-	-	29.91	63.22	28.21
Lower Cadre	2.60	8.33	36.96	1.15	9.40
Self-Employed	9.09	33.33	30.43	3.45	13.68
Total	100.00 (77)	100.00 (24)	100.00 (45)	100.00 (87)	100.00 (234)
<u>SC/ST</u>					
Cultivators	55.74	35.48	11.11	-	35.42
Agricultural and Non- Agricultural Labourers	19.67	3.23	1.85	-	10.83
Managerial/Supervisory	-	-	-	30.30	4.17
Ministerial	-	6.45	35.19	66.67	17.92
Lower Cadre	6.56	35.48	33.33	3.03	15.83
Self-Employed	18.03	19.35	18.52	-	15.83
Total	100.00 (122)	100.00 (31)	100.00 (54)	100.00 (33)	100.00 (240)

suggest that significant differentials in the opportunity of employment in the labour market prevail due to socio-political factors like sex, class and race.¹⁶ On the other hand neo-classical theories of discrimination of Becker,¹⁷ Marshall,¹⁸ highlight that the discrimination in labour market is practised by employers on some rational basis. In India the occupational discrimination is pronounced against low income groups, women

and SC/ST population due to one or another reasons.

Keeping into consideration our analysis we find some evidence to suggest that general castes group of population have an edge over the SC/ST groups of population in obtaining employment in occupations with higher status and better earnings. In fact the SC/ST groups are found to start getting better advantage of education even at middle and secondary level of education, in so far as a much larger proportion (42%) of SC/ST workers with these level of education are able to obtain clerical jobs as compared to workers of general castes with similar level of education (24%). At the higher level of education workers from both the caste groups are more or less equally concentrated in the supervisory/managerial and ministerial jobs. Thus it could be argued that educating particularly providing higher education, to socially disadvantaged groups like SC/ST may be instrumental in reducing the existing levels of inequalities in the opportunities of different levels and status of occupations among them and other castes.

III. DIFFERENCES IN EARNING OPPORTUNITIES

It is found that the persons from SC/ST groups are first at a disadvantage in terms of access to education and then the employment market tends to confound their disadvantage further. Even those of them who are able to complete their education upto a certain level, and to secure employment after that, are expected

to earn lower than similarly placed individuals from groups without their socio-economic disadvantage. It is to this question that we turn ~~our~~ attention to for further analysis. The broad hypothesis put to test is that at similar level of education the differentials in earnings exist against SC/ST groups. In order to isolate the differentials existing out of age, and working experience an analysis has been attempted on the basis of age-earning profiles of persons at similar level of education.

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The studies carried out during past have postulated¹⁹ that the earnings of individuals are positively related to their educational levels. Earnings are found to be significantly higher in case of individuals having higher education as compared to those with lower level of education or illiterates, in fact the earning level also govern by duration of work experience. Differences in earnings at similar level of education are postulated to reflect variation in age and working experience among individuals. It is also observed that initially, earnings of individuals at any level of education have the tendency to increase at a slower rate, than rates of growth in earnings pick-up with the accumulation of experience, reaches the peak, after which it tends to have a tendency to rise till retirement.²⁰

Although earnings of individuals tend to increase with the increase of education and accumulation of job experience

but this relationship is found vary in its extent by race, sex, natural ability, employment status and several other factors. As Blaug²¹ stressed, the distribution of earnings from employment relates to such differentiating factor as sex, natural ability, family circumstances, community environment and the size and sector of establishment. Tilak²² found that the average life time earnings of the backward castes are much less than the non-backward castes, and, every increment in education leads to a higher rate of increment in earnings in case of the latter as compared to the former.

(i) Earning Profiles

Differences in earnings are widely prevalent among SC/ST and general castes population. Do these differences prevail in the same direction for each level of education of workers? How do the earnings differentials increase or decline among these groups with increase in educational levels? Does education reduce or accentuate the initial differences due to socio-economic background of workers? We have attempted to examine these question here on the basis of our sample data.

Overall earnings of the SC/ST are comparatively lower than that of the general caste population. Differences change their pattern with different level of education. These are the highest at secondary level of education, but are in fact, in favour of SC/ST at higher level of education, and significantly

so, at the middle level of education. It seems that the protective discrimination in government jobs in favour of SC/ST is able to effectively 'distort' the traditional differences. What is further significant to note, is that the earning increments with higher stages of education over the base, i.e. below primary education, are consistently higher for SC/ST population. However, at secondary educational level the earning indices of general castes show a greater increase than the SC/ST population. At all remaining educational levels the indices turn-up in favour of SC/ST population.

Table 8 : Earning Profiles of Different Castes by Level of Education

Level of Education	General Castes		SC/ST		All	
	Average earning (Rs.)	Index of earning	Average earning (Rs.)	Index of earning	Average earning (Rs.)	Index of earning
Below Primary	3156.56	100.00	3026.82	100.00	3131.64	100.00
Primary	4675.17	141.11	4597.06	151.88	4789.25	152.93
Middle	6587.50	200.69	7538.33	249.05	7009.09	223.84
Secondary	8982.24	284.56	7971.89	263.38	8299.73	265.03
Higher	14540.28	460.64	14661.21	484.38	14608.54	466.48
All Levels	9074.28	-	6546.18	-	7794.23	-

Thus despite an overall disparity of 37 per cent in favour of general castes, the average earning levels of the two groups are similar at higher level of education. Thus education is found to exert an equalising force between SC/ST and general caste population. It is, however, weakened by the fact that

while about 37 per cent of the general caste workers have had higher education, a similar proportion of the SC/ST workers did not even complete primary education and only 14 per cent of them reached 'higher educational level' and the earning levels of higher education are about five times that of the lowest level. No doubt the SC/ST workers who had benefit of higher levels of education stand more or less equal level with others in terms of earnings. Thus education is found to exert an equalising force between SC/ST and general caste population.

It is, however, often contended that only those in the upper income groups amongst SC/ST are able to benefit from such education and use better employment opportunities. These benefits of the groups of SC/ST population could thus be attributed to their sound economic situation, and are further reinforced by the government's protective policy of preference and reservation. Thus it seems that the government's measures of equalisation in the pattern of educational utilization and income distribution among different groups of population have benefitted only SC/ST population which were already in sound economic position within their caste groups, and, in fact widening the gap in income distribution among SC/ST and other general castes, in general. There are several studies such as the study by Field²³ Jallade²⁴, Blaug²⁵ Psacharopoulos²⁶ also reached at the conclusion that in almost developing countries the government policy for redistribution of income with subsidising education and protection in employment in favour of

disadvantaged groups of society have often favoured rich segments of the specially categorised population and the poorer have remained poor.

(ii) Age - Earning Profiles

Further taking age as the proxy for period of working life we proceed to examine the age-earning profile of workers which would provide us an idea of the increase in life-time earnings of individuals having different levels of education. As we indicated earlier that the earnings of individuals tend to increase with age but it can vary even for the same level of education between SC/ST and general caste population.

Considering our analysis we find the effective working age to get terminated at the age of sixty, it is also found that the earnings generally decline after that age, if some people still continue to work, otherwise most of the people reach at the peak level earnings in the age between 50-60 years, except those with no or little education (Table 10).

Looking at the indices of highest earnings at any time in working career of general caste and SC/ST groups of workers, the overall score of SC/ST workers are much less than workers of general castes. If we examine the pattern of differentials in earning scores of these groups at different levels of education, it is seen that the workers of general caste having primary and below primary levels of education receive better

earning opportunity than the SC/ST workers at any period of their working life, but at the middle and higher educational levels, the earning indices are found significantly much higher in favour of SC/ST workers than the workers of general castes. However, both the groups of workers having secondary education are found to have equal levels of peak earnings in their working life.

Table 9 : Life Time Increase in Earnings - Highest as Percentage of Initial General Castes & SC/ST

Level of Education	General Castes	SC/ST
Below Primary	492.97	227.70
Primary	174.71	174.24
Middle	238.55	368.89
Secondary	185.49	184.95
Higher	213.88	280.17
All Levels	628.99	397.17

Thus the SC/ST workers who have utilized atleast middle level of education receive significantly better earning opportunities as compared to the general caste population. Although, while joining the employment SC/ST population with middle and higher education have lower level of earnings but their earnings increase at higher rate than that of the general caste population during their working periods (Tables 10(a) and 10(b)).

Table 10(a) : Age Earning Profiles of General Castes
Population by Level of Education

(Earnings in Rs.; Age in Years)						
Level of Education	Below 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60 and above
Below Primary	960 (100.00)	1721 (179.32)	4242 (411.84)	4733 (492.97)	4261 (443.86)	3360 (350.00)
Primary	3625 (100.00)	3638 (100.34)	4760 (131.31)	6280 (173.24)	6333 (174.71)	5800 (160.00)
Middle	4150 (100.00)	6344 (152.88)	7220 (173.98)	8200 (197.59)	9900 (238.55)	-
Secondary	-	6595 (100.00)	8888 (134.77)	9925 (150.49)	12233 (185.49)	7900 (119.78)
Higher	-	9919 (100.00)	12450 (125.51)	16050 (161.80)	21215 (213.88)	8225 (82.92)
All Levels	2261 (100.00)	6388 (282.53)	8500 (375.90)	11393 (503.86)	14222 (628.99)	5931 (262.29)

Table 10(b) : Age-Earning Profiles of SC/ST by Level of Education

(Earnings in Rs.; Age in Years)						
Level of Education	Below 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60 and above
Below Primary	2289 (100.00)	2340 (102.22)	3074 (134.29)	4728 (206.54)	5213 (227.70)	2413 (105.38)
Primary	3817 (100.00)	3614 (94.69)	5510 (144.37)	6650 (174.24)	5867 (153.71)	4750 (124.45)
Middle	3000 (100.00)	5827 (194.24)	7180 (239.33)	8600 (286.67)	11067 (368.89)	9000 (300.00)
Secondary	-	6759 (100.00)	9843 (145.63)	8640 (127.84)	12500 (184.95)	6425 (95.06)
Higher	-	8824 (100.00)	14045 (159.16)	14130 (160.12)	24723 (280.17)	-
All Levels	2793 (100.00)	5331 (190.84)	6982 (249.95)	8520 (305.02)	11094 (397.17)	4167 (149.16)

(iii) Overall Assessment of Education in Economic Equality

Finally we have attempted to examine the extent of differentials existing among general caste and SC/ST population at each stage of the chain of the education - economic gains causation - educational facilities, their availment in terms of enrolment and retention in the educational systems, success in securing employment in labour market and earning levels. These measurements are, however, carried out at aggregate levels without accounting for, differences in educational facilities and also for different levels of education.

Thus the analysis indicates that scheduled castes/tribes has a slight advantage over general castes in securing employment and a disadvantage of about 15 per cent in earnings. With also about 15 per cent disadvantage in enrolment, they may not

Table 11 : Disadvantage of SC/ST Population in Gains from Education

Stage	Index (General Castes = 100)
1. Availment of Educational Facilities	60
a) enrolment	73
b) retention	47
2. Labour Market (Success in securing employment)	107
3. Earnings	72
Cumulative Index	46

have a very high drop-out rate, and thus a significant (about 40%) disadvantage in the availment of educational facilities. As a cumulative result of these processes, the gains of scheduled castes from education are only 46 per cent of those derived by the people belonging to general castes.

CONCLUSION

Considering into account to the utilization pattern of education we observed that the population belonging to SC/ST groups is participating in different levels of educational systems to a relatively smaller extent than the general caste groups of population. These difference become more marked while we proceed from primary to higher level of education. Overall, 66 per cent general caste as against of 48 per cent SC/ST population is enrolled in education and those reaching at the higher level of education account for 32 per cent from former and 10 per cent from latter group of population. Further, relating enrolment rates with households/^{income} levels the relationship is more consistent in case of SC/ST than the general castes and at higher income range the rates are much higher in favour of latter group than the former one.

The drop-out at different levels of education are relatively higher among SC/ST than the general castes population, however, these differences get narrow down as we proceed from primary to middle and secondary level of education in fact, the PCI level of individual family is found negatively related with the drop-out rates of both the groups of population.

Further the review of the implications of education in the employment opportunities of different group of individuals revealed that the SC/ST group of population is getting better advantage of education than the general caste population. As the unemployment rates among latter group is relatively higher than the case of former group; this pattern is more closely associated among the individuals with higher level of education. Also, the average waiting period for employment is reported to be at lower order for SC/ST than the general caste population. The pattern of occupational distribution is also noticed gone in favour of SC/ST groups; even at the middle and secondary level of education, in so far as a much higher proportion (42%) of SC/ST with these levels of education are able to obtain clerical jobs than the workers with other castes (24%). Among the workers with higher education are more or less equally concentrated in managerial and ministerial jobs. Differences in earnings between these two group are existing mainly at below middle level of education, which are in favour of general castes. However, at secondary and higher educational levels the disparities in earnings between these two group are substantial, in fact, the increments in earnings at higher level of education are found higher in favour of SC/ST than the general caste population. Thus it is well articulated that among the SC/ST workers who had benefit of higher education stand more or less equal level with general caste workers in terms

of earnings. This indicates that education, particularly higher level of education, can exert an equalising force in the pattern of economic opportunities between SC/ST and general caste population.

However, two important caveats, need to be added to this conclusion on the role of education in equalising economic opportunities. One, whether education is acting as an instrument of equality or inequality would depend on whether the distribution of economic gains of education is less or more unequal than the initial distribution of income among SC/ST and general castes. If the share of economic gains from education, even though smaller in case of SC/ST group, is more than their share in income and wealth, education would have acted towards equalising economic opportunities, despite the inequitable distribution of its economic gains. Therefore, our findings do not necessarily imply on an 'inequalising' role of education. In fact, the more detailed analysis of various aspects of educational and labour market process earlier tend to suggest that education has engendered a reduction in inequality in the opportunities of economic gains between SC/ST and general caste population groups. Two, different levels of education are found to have differential implications for equality of economic opportunity. Since, education upto the middle level (eight year of schooling) is important mainly for universalisation of literacy and education, has little

impact on economic equality, if at all, it is found to have an inequalising effect. But the secondary and higher levels of education are definitely found to tilt the balance in favour of the scheduled castes/tribes. It is, therefore, we may argue that education could certainly play an effective role in equalisation of economic opportunities between scheduled castes and general caste groups of population, if the secondary and higher levels of educational opportunities may be more accessible to these disadvantaged groups.

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